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INDIAN EDUCATION.

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THE NATIONAL INDIAN POLICY HAS RANGED FROM PREPARING THE INDIAN FOR ASSIMILATION INTO THE GENERAL POPULATION TO PREPARATION FOR LIVING IN HIS OWN GROUP. INDIAN EDUCATION, WHICH HAS BEEN CONTROLLED BY THIS POLICY, MAY BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR GENERAL PERIODS--(1) UNTIL 1870 THE POLICY WAS THE EXCLUSION OF INDIANS FROM NATIONAL LIFE, (2) THE POLICY WAS TO REMAKE THE INDIANS IN THE IMAGE OF THE WHITE FARMER OF RURAL AMERICA BETWEEN 1870-1930, (3) BETWEEN 1930 AND 1960 THERE WAS A GRADUAL SHIFT TO THE AIM OF TERMINATING FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE INDIANS, AND (4) THE OBJECTIVE OF FULL PARTICIPATION BY THE INDIAN IN AMERICAN LIFE, ON AND OFF THE RESERVATIONS, HAS DEVELOPED SINCE 1960. THE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR INDIANS HAVE SHIFTED WITH THE POLICY AND PRESENTLY ARE AS FOLLOWS--(1) HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION FOR 90 PER CENT OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE YOUTH, (2) ONE-HALF OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ATTENDING COLLEGE IN PREPARATION FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREERS, AND (3) ONE-HALF OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES PREPARING THEMSELVES FOR CAREERS IN TECHNICAL, SERVICE, AND TRADE OCCUPATIONS. THE MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS BLOCKING IMPROVEMENT OF INDIAN EDUCATION ARE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, LANGUAGE BARRIERS, AND REMEDIAL EDUCATION. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RECORD, VOL. 52, NO. 3, DECEMBER 1966. (ES)

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Indian Education

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A tsudy of the current educational status of American Indian students cannot be isolated from the historical controversy over the best means of solving the entire "Indian problem." On one side of the debate is the conviction that all Americans should be alike, that Indians must be "assimilated" or "integrated," whether they like it or not, and that nothing will speed up integration faster than to break up the reservation communities. On the opposing side, many defend the inherent right of Indians to be different and to group themselves as they choose.

The educational policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs has historically been a reflection of the federal "Indian Policy." This national policy has ranged all the way from eliminating the reservations to reinforcing them. As a result, educational policy has steered an erratic course.

For example: the official view of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was that ". . . the Federal off-reservation education of Navajos is directed entirely toward the preparation of these children for permanent off-reservation employment," and in 1965, the Commissioner recommended that ". . . schools be established on the reservation for Navajo student so that the children could live at home with their parents."[1]

Indian education as determined by the "National Indian Policy," may be divided into four general periods.[2]

I. *First Period* (1568 - 1870)
National Indian Policy— Exclusion of Indians from national life.
Educational Objectives—Religious groups provided the only formal education, with the dual purpose of extending Christianity and establishing western culture among the Indians.

The United States Government recognized the responsibility for educating the Indians when the first federal appropriation was made in 1819; the sum of $10,000 was distributed to religious groups for aid of Indian education. The Reverend Eleazer Wheellock conceived the idea of a boarding school to remove children from parental influence as a means of speeding up the process of civilization. New Indian treaties included provisions for federal schools.

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II. *Second Period.* (1870 - 1930)
National Indian Policy—To remake Indians in the image of the white farmer of rural America.
Educational Objectives—To teach farming and homemaking skills.

Indian education during this period was primarily a continuation of the traditions established by missionaries. Carlisle Indian School established a school pattern of "half work, half instruction," which prevailed for many years.

Widespread criticism of Indian education brought about the first major research on the subject: The Institute of Government Research published "The Mariam Survey"[4] in 1928. In consequence, educational policy underwent three basic modifications:

(1) The concept of boarding schools as a climate for acculturation gave way to the idea that children should be educated within their home environment.
(2) The school program of half work, half instruction, was abandoned in favor of a policy of full-time instruction.
(3) The use of native language was no longer forbidden; the Indian student was encouraged to have pride in his heritage.

III. *Third Period.* (1930 - 1960)
National Indian Policy—A gradual shift to the aim of terminating Federal responsibility for the Indians.
Educational Objectives—To prepare Indians for life on or off the reservation, to improve basic education and to restore pride in Indian culture.

During this period the Federal Government and state public schools began to share responsibility for the education of Indians. Passage of the Johnson-O'Malley Act, Public Law 815 and Public Law 874, enabled the states to take the same responsibility for their Indian populations as for non-Indians. (By 1960, over 60% of all Indian students were in public schools.)

In 1944 the Bureau of Indian Affairs undertook to learn the facts about Indian education. How did the Indians' educational achievement compare with that of white children? A monograph by Peterson[5] recorded the first full-scale evaluation of the school work of Indian children. The results showed a wide variation among Indians of various cultural backgrounds and home environments, but Indian students attending public schools with non-Indian children did better on reading, arithmetic and language tests than Indian children attending other types of schools.

A follow-up study by Anderson[6] and others gave more consideration to student achievement in relation to cultural and home backgrounds. It was established that as the cultural environment of Indian children approached that of white children in the public school, the Indian educational achievements more closely matched those of the white children. Achievement, from highest to lowest by type of school attended, was (1) Indians in public schools, (2) Indians in parochial schools, and (3) Indians in Federal schools.

In an extension of the Anderson study made by Coombs and others (1958), 23,000 pupils (42% white) were tested to determine

what relationship exists between academic achievement of Indian children and certain environmental factors. On the basis of achievement, the results ranked as follows:

1. White pupils in public schools.
2. Indian pupils in public schools.
3. Indian pupils in Federal schools.
4. Indian pupils in mission schools.

Coombs concluded that the chief hindrance to educational achievement of Indian children was lack of "acculturation," with two of the best "indices of acculturation" being blood quantum and pre-school language. With few exceptions, the higher-ranking groups had less Indian blood than the others and spoke more English before entering school.

A three-year study of Indians in New Mexico, by Zintz, indicated that the three major problem areas blocking the improvement of Indian education are (1) cultural differences, (2) language barriers and (3) remedial education.[7] A current evaluation of Indian educational achievement, sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is presently under way.

IV. *Fourth Period.* (1960 -)

National Indian Policy—Full participation in American life, on and off the reservations.

Educational Objectives—To prepare Indians for life in the 20th century; to preserve Indian pride of heritage

Specific Objectives—(Branch of Education) by 1970

1. High school graduation for 90% of high school age youth.
2. One-half of high school graduates attending college in preparation for professional careers.
3. One-half of high school graduates preparing themselves for careers in technical, service and trade occupations.

The major problem currently facing the Indians is their failure to adjust to twentieth-century America's industrialized society. The younger Indians are staying in school longer than ever before, but the school dropout rate among them is still a serious problem. In a study of the dropout of American Indians at the secondary level, Wax and Wax (1964) reported that few Indian adolescents go to school in search of scholastic or academic advantages.[8] Forty-two per cent of those who entered high school dropped out in the ninth or tenth grade. (Twenty-two per cent left after the eighth grade.) Wax concluded that the country Indian dropout is not so much influenced by his conservative elders as by quasi-official rejection and a high school system which favors the more advantaged students.

Reservation Indians seem to be still a world apart from American society as a whole. Spilka (1966), in a study aimed at determining educational achievement and adjustment of Sioux Indians through a measurement of growing alienation of Indian students, hypothesized that this alienation is a result of traditional child-rearing practices employed by Sioux parents.[9] Simirenko (1966), in a study of two Washo Indian communities, concluded that despite almost

universal exposure to public education, ethnic communities retain their identities because substantial numbers of their members resist acculturation.[7] He suggested that the most significant effects of our system of education appear only after the individual Indian has abandoned his close-knit native community and entered the mainstream of American society.

At present, there are no reports of recent comprehensive studies of the education of Indian students in North Dakota. Several tribes in the state have compiled inter-tribal reports of surveys in connection with Community Action programs.

Enrollment of Indians in North Dakota public schools rose from 239 in 1947 to 1315 in 1965. Under the Johnson-O'Malley Act, elementary and secondary public schools in the state received more than $200,000 for their Indian enrollment in 1965; in addition, eight public schools received about $120,000 under Public Law 874.

Present investigations related to the "Indian Problem" are based on the following questions:

1. What type of Indian adult educational programs would be most effective?
2. Do Indian students who have attended integrated public schools attain a higher degree of "success" in life than those Indians who have attended segregated schools?
3. Should Indian students be prepared for reservation life or non-reservation life?

Research has established that Indian students attending public schools with predominantly white enrollment generally show a higher level of academic achievement. This should not be interpreted to mean that Federal schools are inferior; in many of these schools the enrollment consists largely of young Indians whose families have preserved their traditional isolation from white society.

FOOTNOTES

1. U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Report to the Senate Appropriations Com- on the Navajo Bordertown Dormitory Program by The Commissioner of Indian Affairs.* Feb., 1965.
2. "Historical Status of Indian Education," *Indian Education.* Oct. 15, 1965, p. 423.
3. Lewis Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928).
4. Shailer Peterson, *How Well are Indian Children Educated* (Washington: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1948).
5. Kenneth E. Anderson, *et al. The Educational Achievement of Indian Children* (Washington: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1953).
6. Madison L. Coombs, *et al. The Indian Child Goes to School* (Washington: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1958).
7. Miles V. Zintz, *The Indian Research Study* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1957-1960).
8. Rosalie H. Wax and Murray L. Wax, *Dropout of American Indians at the Secondary Level* (Atlanta: Emory University, 1964).
9. Bernard Spilka, "Achievement, Educational Adjustment, and Alienation Among the Sioux." Preliminary manuscript for U.S. Office of Education, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado, 1966. (mimeographed.)

10. Alex Simerenko, *Socio-Economic Variables in the Agriculturation Process: A Pilot Study of Two Washo Indian Communities* (Washington: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Nov., 1956.)